ST

UNITED NATIONS

SECRETARIAT

Distr.
LIMITED

ST/SG/AC.5/L.7
5 March 1965
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

COMMITTEE ON THE INTERNATIONAL
YEAR FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Statement made by the French delegation to the Committee on the International Year for Human Rights on 5 March 1965

The French delegation must take a brief look back at the conditions under which the Committee's discussions on section E of the document prepared by the Working Group took place on Friday, 26 February, in order to clarify the legal nature of the conclusions reached on that occasion.

At the beginning of its session, the Committee decided to conduct its proceedings according to the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council; it also decided to examine the document prepared by its Working Group without voting and to confine itself to identifying the proposals on which there was a unanimous consensus of opinion and recording the various opinions expressed in the event of disagreement.

Under these conditions, a compromise text submitted by the delegations of Argentina and Brazil was examined. A number of changes made in it at the request, in particular, of the delegations of India and Costa Rica made it impossible for the French delegation to agree to that text.

It was then suggested that, despite that opposition, the text as amended constituted a recommendation by the Committee, and that the French delegation's position should be recorded elsewhere. This formula was also unacceptable to the French delegation.

It was thus clear that, in the absence of a consensus of opinion - that is, of a unanimous agreement - none of these formulae could be considered a formal decision of the Committee.

If the majority of the Committee had wished its view to prevail, it could have asked the Committee to change its procedure and resume normal voting, and could then have caused the Committee to take a decision by means of a vote.

Since the Committee's rules of procedure were not changed and no vote was taken it is clear that, whatever designation the Chairman of the Committee may have given them, the conclusions reached on examination of section E of the working paper are nothing more than a statement of the various positions adopted by the delegations members of the Committee.

The French delegation regrets the apparent disregard, particularly by the Chair, of elementary rules of procedure; it has no doubt that the Commission on Human Rights will know how to evaluate the circumstances in which the Committee's debates took place. It formally requests that the full text of its statements should be included in the Committee's report.